

Suicide in young people

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Myth: You have to be mentally ill to think about suicide.

- **Fact:** Most people have thought of suicide from time to time and not all people who die by suicide have mental health problems at the time of death. However, many people who kill themselves do suffer with their mental health, typically to a serious degree. Sometimes it's known about before the person's death and sometimes not.

Myth: People who talk about suicide aren't serious and won't go through with it.

- **Fact:** People who kill themselves have often told someone that they do not feel life is worth living or that they have no future. Some may have actually said they want to die. While it's possible that someone might talk about suicide as a way of getting the attention they need, it's vitally important to take anybody who talks about feeling suicidal seriously.

Myth: Once a person has made a serious suicide attempt, that person is unlikely to make another.

- **Fact:** People who have tried to end their lives before are significantly more likely to eventually die by suicide than the rest of the population.

Myth: Talking about suicide is a bad idea as it may give someone the idea to try it.

- **Fact:** Suicide can be a taboo topic in society. Often, people feeling suicidal don't want to worry or burden anyone with how they feel and so they don't discuss it. By asking directly about suicide you give them permission to tell you how they feel. People who have felt suicidal will often say what a huge relief it is to be able to talk about what their experiencing. Once someone starts talking they've got a better chance of discovering other options to suicide.

Myth: People who are suicidal want to die

- **Fact:** The majority of people who feel suicidal do not actually want to die; they do not want to live the life they have. The distinction may seem small but is in fact very important and is why talking through other options at the right time is so vital.

Some harsh facts

- Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among young people ages 10 to 24
- Suicide attempts by LGB youth and questioning youth are 4 to 6 times more likely to result in injury, poisoning, or overdose that requires treatment from a doctor or nurse, compared to their straight peers.
- 1 out of 6 students nationwide (grades 9-12) seriously considered suicide in the past year
- 70% of all suicides happen in the general population and only 30% to those with service support

Teens and young people who are most likely to become depressed

when they experience stressful events:

Have low self-esteem

Are very critical of themselves

Feel little control over negative events

Adolescent girls are twice as likely as boys to experience depression.

A family history of depression also puts teenagers at greater risk.

The following events or situations can cause depression in teenagers:

Bullying or harassment at school or somewhere else

Child abuse - both physical and sexual

Lack of social skills

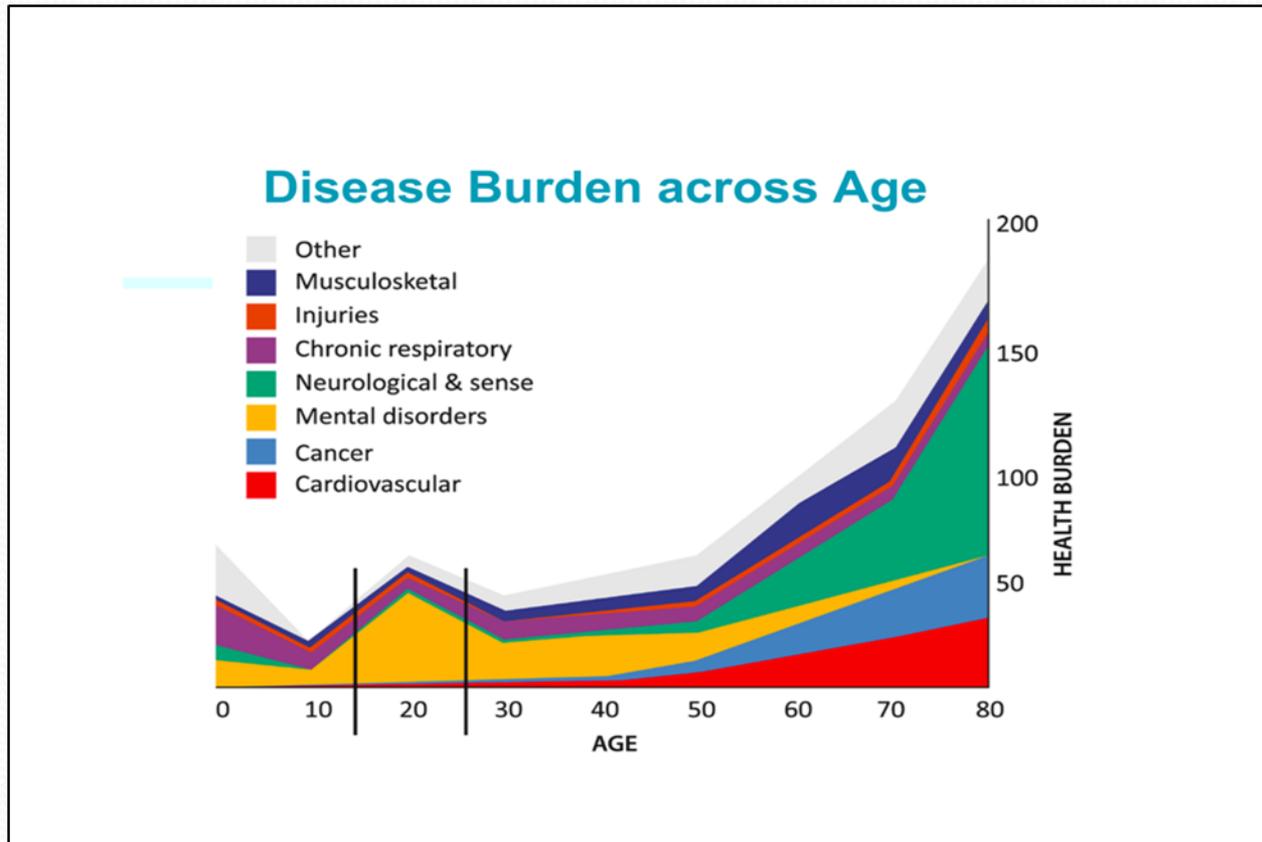
Learning disabilities

Long-term illness

Poor parenting or caregiving

Stressful life events, such as the loss of a parent to death or divorce

The disease burden across age



What you should do!

- Always take the time to ask how someone is feeling and explore this
- Never delay or worry that you will upset the young person by asking
- Always offer hope and practical help
- Be accessible, plan ahead and give options to help the young person feel supported and not alone
- Ask for help yourself if you feel you need it!
- Suicide prevention is everyone's business and will take the whole community to make a difference

Helpful sites/numbers

- **What is HOPELineUK?**

HOPELineUK is a confidential helpline, staffed by trained professionals who give non-judgemental support, practical advice and information to

Young people under the age of 35 feeling suicidal

Anyone concerned that a young person they know may be at risk of suicide:

How can I get in touch?

Call: 0800 068 41 41

- Samaritans
- Sussex partnership
- Young minds
- <http://www.thetrevorproject.org/>

The morning after I killed myself

- The morning after I killed myself, I woke up..I made myself breakfast in bed. I added salt and pepper to my eggs and used my toast for a cheese and bacon sandwich. I squeezed a grapefruit into a juice glass. I scraped the ashes from the frying pan and rinsed the butter off the counter. I washed the dishes and folded the towels.
- The morning after I killed myself, I fell in love. Not with the boy down the street or the middle school principal. Not with the everyday jogger or the grocer who always left the avocados out of the bag. I fell in love with my mother and the way she sat on the floor of my room holding each rock from my collection in her palms until they grew dark with sweat. I fell in love with my father down at the river as he placed my note into a bottle and sent it into the current. With my brother who once believed in unicorns but who now sat in his desk at school trying desperately to believe I still existed.
- The morning after I killed myself, I walked the dog. I watched the way her tail twitched when a bird flew by or how her pace quickened at the sight of a cat. I saw the empty space in her eyes when she reached a stick and turned around to greet me so we could play catch but saw nothing but sky in my place. I stood by as strangers stroked her muzzle and she wilted beneath their touch like she did once for mine.
- The morning after I killed myself, I went back to the neighbours' yard where I left my footprints in concrete as a two year old and examined how they were already fading. I picked a few daylilies and pulled a few weeds and watched the elderly woman through her window as she read the paper with the news of my death. I saw her husband spit tobacco into the kitchen sink and bring her her daily medication.
- The morning after I killed myself, I watched the sun come up. Each orange tree opened like a hand and the kid down the street pointed out a single red cloud to his mother.
- The morning after I killed myself, I went back to that body in the morgue and tried to talk some sense into her. I told her about the avocados and the stepping stones, the river and her parents. I told her about the sunsets and the dog and the beach.
- The morning after I killed myself, I tried to unkill myself, but couldn't finish what I started. — Meggie